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TECHNOLOGIES OF TIME

ECONOFICTION CAPITAL FIXE, MACHINES, MARX, MARXISM, TECHNOLOGY, TIME

Marx's dictum that, in the final instance, all economy dissolves into that of time¹ does not in any way imply that this time can be reduced to a presence or "living present". Time is just as little linear or cyclical as the labor to which capital exposes itself is initially possible or actual labor. Withdrawn from an Aristotelian doctrine of modalities, it is initially "labor at all", "labor sans phrase", difference on this side of every possible determination of labor or difference of this determination. In this respect, all determinations of time in economics emerge from an inescapable A-precedence, which manifests itself in them as the withdrawal of a temporality of value. The concept of "value", which for good reason remains indeterminate and ultimately indeterminable in Marx, i.e. does not become a concept, speaks of nothing else. It heralds all the antinomies of time that will be played out in the economic order. The delta G always

translates the withdrawal of time into an instruction for future work, or it determines itself as an encroachment on future time. It transforms time into a project of its own future by throwing its present back on itself like a shadow of its own future. Every capitalist, Marx explains, “has already appropriated the future through the appropriation of the present.”² “Value” as a subject is founded in this concept, because this subjugation or subjectivation is what Marx calls the transposition through which labour becomes productive labour, because it produces surplus value. In a certain way, the delta G is thus always already written as the exploitation of an eternity of labor. It is no coincidence that Marx speaks of a “transubstantiation”, as if in a theological allusion. Labor becomes a pro-

1 Marx: Grundrisse, p.105.

2 Ibid, p.284.

ductive labor in that it is touched as if by an eternity. This deification is the effect of a claim to the infinite, with which the delta G has produced and colonized the future. Capital “is” this colonization of time. It is true that labor cannot enter the economic order “at all”. But transposed or transubstantiated into future labor, it becomes an inexhaustible reservoir of possible labor that can always be called into reality anew in the magical ritual of the money symbol. This transposition relaxes time into the continuum of an ever-again or into the homogeneity of what is to come as one and the same. In this respect, circular and linear time are mutually dependent. Capital inscribes itself from its own future, it designs the present towards a delta G that it is not and cannot become. Always ahead of itself, “real” capital is always after the fact. But being so outside of itself, its ecstasy also remains without event: the cold ecstasy of a mediation that emerges from the erasure of difference and only ever finds its way back to itself in a circular manner. From here, everything concentrates on the interfaces of transposition and transubstantiation. For what is this possibility of “posing” time or turning it into a “frame”?

In Marx’s text, there is an incessant, non-manifest movement that constantly plays around the boundaries of capitalist immanence in order to transpose labor “at all” into possible labor. Its name is technique. Before a labor process establishes the immanence of “value” and enables relations of exchange and use, time and space must have been opened up in which this “value” is constellated. The “value” can manifest itself as a “dialectic” of use and exchange only if it has placed itself in a concealed relationship to a technology that precedes it. In order to “be” what it is, it requires technical supplements that step in at the intervals of its own insufficiency: “Capital first subordinates itself to labor with the technical conditions in which it historically finds it.”³ Marx thus prepares a concept of technology that cannot be reduced to apparatus and machine. Whatever may enter production and circulation as a technical device emerges from techniques that must have been used “earlier”. Techniques therefore do not first become a topic for Marx when he analyzes the means and machines used in the process of work. Techniques initially allow the transposition of this labor itself. For labor does not only produce use values for capital.

3 Marx: Capital, Vol. I, p. 328.

It must itself be produced as its use value, i.e. become labor power. This requires specific techniques of time and space in which it can be presented as use-value. Where the apologies of the Delta G give nothing to labor, Marx writes its genesis. Where the bourgeois indulges in

the magical spell of a transubstantiation or deification of labour, Marx deciphers which *téchne* allows this *deus ex machina* to appear on stage in order to stage it as the “soul of the economy”. For all labor, Marx repeats as if in passing, requires cooperation: a coming together “in” space and a meeting “in” time in order to be able to unfold; “the existence of agglomeration, of the heaping together of many workers in the same space (in one place), working simultaneously, is its first precondition – or is itself already the material existence of cooperation. This presupposition underlies all its more highly developed forms”⁴ Far from functioning as a fundamental category in which an order could be established, labor recurs to presuppositions that cannot be fully determined economically. They arrive like marginal conditions of a “framework” that make an economy of labor possible in the first place. For what is a framework? What agglomerates labor, what places it “in” time, “in” space? Marx consults Plato’s *politeia* in order to borrow a marginal concept of technology that traces this framework. Plato demands a temporal technique here that has split off every work (*érgon*) from the accessory or secondary work (*párerгон*); as Marx notes: “If something is only performed as a secondary work, then the time corresponding to its production is often missed. The work cannot await the leisure of the one who has to perform it, but rather the one who performs the work must be guided by the conditions of its production, etc., and must therefore not perform it as a secondary work”⁵ The work does not tolerate delay, it does not await leisure. It follows its own logic to which the worker must submit. Its production must be the main thing and must not remain peripheral. Marx also takes this “point of view that the *téchne* cannot be practiced as a *párerгон*, a secondary work”⁶ from texts by other ancient authors. At a stroke, temporal techniques thus open up a scenario of labor that creates structures of cooperation.

4 Marx: Economic Manuscript 1861-1863, MEW vol. 43, Berlin 1990, p.247.

5 Ibid, p.277.

6 Ibid, p.279f. – See also Marx: Capital, Vol. I, p.387f (footnote).

It is therefore a matter of a constellation of “corresponding” points in time that must not be missed. In order to be able to correspond or be analogous to one another, it must be possible to distinguish strictly between work and secondary work, *érgon* and *párerгон*. In certain respects, the *téchne* must have already made this distinction in itself, it must have separated the right use from its abuse. Technical precautions must have been taken against a wrong or inappropriate use of technology. Only in this way can it be prevented that the work takes on the character of a *párerгон* and that the correspondence of the points in time is disturbed by useless idleness. This is also the point of departure for Marx’s sigh: “Le platonisme où va-t-il se nicher! – Where will Platonism nestle everywhere!”⁷ The Platonic technique of time condenses the points of temporal coincidence in order to create the illusion of a temporal continuum. This continuum encompasses the horizon of cooperation, useful labor, exchange and the use of products in equal measure. But that is why the present, in which living people expose, appear or present themselves to one another, is not without preconditions. It is a technical present dependent on marginal techniques of time that distinguish the right use of *téchne* from the abuse of leisure. Only this makes it possible to construct a temporal-spatial continuum in which “value” can appear. And this is the original achievement of capital. “Capital owns nothing but the union of the masses of hands and instruments that it finds. It agglomerates them under its control. This is its real accumulation; the accumulation of

workers on points together with their instruments. This will be dealt with in more detail in the so-called accumulation of capital. “8 The simultaneity that is created in this *téchne* must be shared by many. They must be able to find or gather in it as in a continuum of corresponding points in time. This is now staged as the punctuality of space. What the “vulgar” understanding of time as “being-in-time” levels out to the unquestionable naturalness of a “world time” emerges from a technical leveling of its disjointedness. It inscribes itself in time by homogenizing it or erasing it as a difference.

7 Marx: Capital, Vol. I, p. 388 (footnote).

8 Marx: Grundrisse, p.415.

However, this erasure will not be without trace. The “point in time” will not be free of a caesura that characterizes every correspondence. In it, many relate to many, they coordinate or are coordinated. Since they do not become one, they divide into the point in time. But this already divides the point in time “itself”, or the now is subject to this division in itself. In this respect, the simultaneous is the result of a technical constellation that arranges time and space and thus enables the transposition and transubstantiation of labor. “If workers cannot work together directly at all without being together, if their conglomeration in a certain space is therefore a condition of their cooperation, then wage laborers cannot cooperate without the same capital, the same capitalist, using them simultaneously, i.e. buying their labor simultaneously. “9 First of all, then, this simultaneity of the now emerges from this detour via space. It must

have become a “certain space” in which the many come together. The immediacy of their interaction results from a mastery of this space that has made it topographically inscribable. However, this has already referred it to a symbolic order that makes it addressable and available in this way. Many workers must have been bought at the same time. On the one hand, therefore, the specific space is a reflection of a simultaneity that is available in the money symbol. But since this symbol, for its part, “is” only an instruction for the future, it has, on the other hand, also escaped simultaneity “in” space. For this reason, the now of agglomeration cannot be derived from phenomenologies of a self-presence of individuals who are in “their” place. Nor is it given to this self-presence as

“world time”, in which the many could find themselves as in a time-space. Rather, self-presence and “world time” are the effect of a technical-symbolic incision that has already grasped the future as the not-yet of a present. It places itself as an in-between future of technologies, constellates the many and situates the individual in a technically generated space that designs itself towards a future and stages its suitability by projecting it. This incision has thus subjected the many to transmissions in which the “world” that “world” can appear to them, which captures them. This world only knows the place with regard to this transfer or in a transferred meaning, and from the beginning Marx therefore announces a problem of the medial. Space pushes itself forward as a means of transmission.

9 Marx: Capital, vol. I, *ibid.* p. 349.

It is itself a space of transmission that allows the techniques of time to set *érgon* and *párrergon* apart. “The timely effect here depends on the simultaneous application of many combined working days, the extent of the useful effect on the number of workers, which, however, always remains smaller than the number of workers who would individually fill the

same effective space in the same period of time. “10 These are, in fact, techniques of combinatorics that are introduced here. They allow for the timeliness and simultaneity of the same period of time, which thus becomes a space of action or makes the *érgon* stageable. But this, for its part, has already assigned technology a *parérgona* assigned a *parérgonic* status. For it belongs to the economy just as much as it does not belong to it. It opens up a period of time in which the economy of the work can be produced. It is true that cooperation is a precondition of the *érgon*, and in this respect no economy can dispense with it. But at the same time, technology is not subordinate to this *érgon*. It is not absorbed into the sphere of action that is produced with it, for it is neither simply an economic expression, nor can it become an economic expression without “rest”. It is true that a certain number of workers are purchased, and this is a significant economic factor. However, depending on the conditions of cooperation under which they are deployed, they develop a larger or smaller sphere of influence. Combined labor assets have a greater impact than individual ones could. However, this does not affect their number, but only the techniques of their cooperation, and is therefore not reflected at the level of their purchase price, i.e. economically. “The social productive power of labor develops free of charge as soon as the workers are placed under certain conditions, and capital places them under these conditions. “11 And this opens up a rift. Techniques of cooperation do not enter into the ecological expression, or only in a roundabout way. They remain unexpressed, interrupt it or expose it to a certain “outside” of its economy. The gratuitousness of ecological conditions removes them from any clear economic representation. Marx insists on this explicitly and repeatedly: before any recourse to technology as an economic category, the *téchne* prefigures a gratuitous framework that gives it *parérgonal* status in this sense. Between work and ancillary work, *érgon* and *páérgon*, only a technical distinction can be

10 Ibid, p.347.

11 Ibid, p.353.

be distinguished in that their *téchne* in itself is not free from a *parérgonal* undecidability. Therefore, the time of the point in time that is produced in it is no more simply “economic” than the space in which workers and instruments accumulate as if on points. Every timeliness emerges from medial dispositions that precede it and have withdrawn into the economic expression “simultaneously” at the moment of their arrival. For this reason, every correspondence is split in itself, it is disjunction and renunciation, agreement and difference. In other words, the usurpation of space returns to itself through a temporal technique of always-again as a non-simultaneity of time. Like every transmission, that of cooperation is underpinned by a kind of entropic noise, in which a difference that cannot be represented in it is displayed and concealed, in that a “crowding together of time and space by means of communication and transportation “12 is staged.

This gathering of many workers in one period of time thus creates a new situation. The *parérgonal* status of techniques of cooperation generates gratuitous conditions under which social productivity develops. However, resistance also recurs in the noise of this gratuitousness, which is accumulated by technical transmission relations like an en- tropic “remainder” and can only be circumvented or postponed in them. All in all, the economic inexpressiveness of cooperative structures thus releases moments of irregularity that can only be controlled by command. “The command of the capitalist on the field of production

now becomes as indispensable as the command of the general on the battlefield,” notes Marx, not least because a certain resistance is staged in the concurrence of agglomeration: “With the mass of workers employed simultaneously, their resistance grows and with it necessarily the pressure of capital to overcome this resistance.”¹³ The parergonal status of each *téchne* can only become controllable through a certain militarization of labour. At least this is what Marx seems to suggest when he also speaks of this cooperation as a “regimentation”¹⁴. Technization and militarization are therefore not just dis- positions that access an economy under certain circumstances and as if from outside. They are as immanent to it as they are not.

12 Marx: Wages, Price, Profit, MEW vol. 16, p. 127.

13 Marx: Capital, Vol. I, p. 350.

14 Marx: Grundrisse, p.489.

Indispensable in order to decide or express the parergonal undecidability of cooperative techniques, the entanglement of technical-military dispositions simultaneously eludes any unambiguous economic category. The labor force is being directed. Its use value, the ability to produce a greater value than its exchange value, emerges from disciplinary techniques that inscribe themselves on the productive body in arrangements of technical medialities. The talk of a “power” of capital is therefore not a “metaphor”. We must literally read how this power is intertwined with productivity or is itself productive power: it is dispositive in the literal sense, not because it is directly reflected as surplus value, but as a detour through which it affects surplus value.

This dispositive is as much a disposition as it is a configuration. The simultaneity of “in-time” and “in space” is not simple, but broken and circuitous. It has multiplied the here and now. It does not dissolve it into an “always” and “everywhere”, as suggested by Hegel’s phenomenology. Due to media interventions, simultaneity as a divided “now” withholds itself from any simple or “actual” now. This is exactly how these interventions set space apart, but only by leaving the trace of its spatialization inscribed in its punctuality. The togetherness or togetherness can therefore neither be governed by a time economy of sequence nor by that of a homogeneous space. The spatialization in which simultaneity is produced returns as an interruption of every simultaneity. Its concept is subverted in itself, that of place dislocated. “The duplicity of the simul, to which it points, brings together neither points nor now, neither places nor phases. It is an expression of the complicity or the common origin of time and space and of combining as the condition of every appearance of being.”¹⁵ In order to be able to adhere to itself, the “corresponding point in time” must therefore always have been missed. It must have evaded its putting-into-work, the *enérgeia*, just like every *dy’namis* that obeys a *télos* of “reality”. Only in this way can it “correspond”. And this breaks open the technical paradox of every technique. Precisely because the *téchne* sets itself to work as an *érgon*, it is not free from the *párrergon*. It can only produce simultaneity by splitting itself “simultaneously” (*simul*) into an a-pre-sent together. It can neither be divided into temporal

15 Jacques Derrida: Marginal Passages of Philosophy, p.74.

nor in spatial determinations of technology, and this prefigures the concept of a *téchne* within every technology. For it refers “every present of technical configurations to an a-present *téchne* that remains uncatchable and antecedent, so that only from it can the problematic

field of differential technical relations be traced. How else could one even speak of a topology of technical power, i.e. the censoring possibility of choice and the exclusion of possibilities?

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In this respect, cooperation follows a logic that has broken with any notion of spatiotemporal continuity. These breaks are of a technical nature. All determinations of time with which critique operates emerge from constellations in which intervals of time and space are technically inscribed and made available. Only under this precondition can concepts of abstract labor and surplus labor, categories of value and surplus value come to economic fruition. This is not because there is a structure to be deciphered in this *téchne* that “brings forth” the economic: it is not a matter of derivative relations in which the economy generates itself, not of a technical “basis” from which it would rise. All this would only level out into a positive historiography of technology and media, which Marx analyzes in marginal definitions of transposition and transubstantiation. Such marginal determinations are decisive, not despite, but because they “are” marginal and parergonal. This is the only reason why a cooperation is structured in them, which can always be constellated differently by becoming technically inscribable as space-time. Time axes can be broken, spatial positionings can be shifted and arranged differently. However, none of these are operations that can be derived directly from economic expressions. Cooperation is initially technically determined, and Marx therefore carefully distinguishes between cooperation and division of labor. The latter describes a structure on which economic purposes have already been established.

Cooperation, on the other hand, marks the elementary possibility of configuring production processes as a division of labor “at all”. It relates to the division of labor like the *téchne* relates to technology, which inscribes itself into every technical-machinic coherence as a withdrawal or possible interruption. In other words, the difference between co

16 Georg Christoph Tholen: Platzverweis, in: Norbert Bolz/Friedrich Kittler/Georg Christoph Tholen (eds.), *Computer als Medium*, Munich: Fink 1994, p.129.

operation and the division of labor, the question of common terms in the spiocentric sense, which make the capital process possible just as much as they elude it. At the very least, they evade any attempt to define them conclusively in the sense of an economic teleology and thus open up differences of the political. It is true that these differences will always be opened up technically, but not because they are absorbed in positive techniques, but because every technique must have exposed itself to the possibility of being determined differently than economically. In any case, what Marx calls the “technical composition of capital”¹⁷ does not coincide with its composition of value. Rather, conflicts about the configuration of technology are ignited by marginal determinations of *téchne*. Under the conditions of its utilization, it is always exposed to an access that makes it the province or reservoir of a certain, economically defined colonialism of time. However, this does not originate from *téchne*, but rather from the economic techniques of its appropriation. And that is why texts of the technical are of a polyvalence that also eludes a conclusive instrumentalization through an economic teleology. Technically composed, the productive body exposes itself to a certain economic non-expressibility. It is withdrawn from itself as soon as it expresses itself economically. Every translation, even the technical one, revolves around marks of its own insufficiency or non-determination. The transposition of labor must disregard the fact that the translation of “labor at all” into possible or actual labor iterates around the untranslatable fissure of the technical,

which at the same time de-centers the economy. And this gives the common terms a virulence that exposes not only the ecological, but also every technical formation to erosion. An asynchronicity or untimeliness has always recurred in the “interior” of technology, which must be minimized or levelled out by the economic “discourse” at the same time. Hence the ungovernable polyvalence of techniques and technologies. It is true that under conditions of cooperation a space can be traversed in a shorter time, that time sequences can be made comparable by distributing them over different spaces. But the operators that allow these mon- tages of time axes or the diversification of spaces already presuppose a place that is missing in the place of the simul. The colonization of time only succeeds as a dislocation and levelling of temporal ruptures, which allows every simultaneity of the érgon to rise from a parer- gonal non-simultaneity. And this ver-

17 Cf. Marx: Capital, Vol. I, p. 640.

sinks the conflict into the interior of technology, in whose continuum of time and space the translation of “labor in general” into the appropriation of future labor succeeds. “The most important thing remains: This first trans- position of the social character of labor as the social character of capital, of the productive power of social labor as the productive power of capital; finally, the first transformation of formal subsumption under capital into a real change in the mode of production itself.”¹⁸

In this respect, the social character of labor is configured from temporal-spatial arrangements that give possible labor the gratuitous precondition for its appearance. Marx calls this their transposition. The fact that money is an instruction for future work is reflected in techniques of cooperation, which are themselves techniques of time and are reflected in the process of labor and exploitation. “From the future tense, the supplementing of the different processes is here transferred to the present, whereby the commodity, when begun on one side, is finished on the other. At the same time, in that these different operations are performed with virtuosity, because they are reduced to simple functions, there is added to this simultaneity, which is inherent in cooperation in general, the shortening of the working time, which is achieved in each of the simultaneous and complementary functions that are combined to form the whole; so that not only are more whole commodities, more commodities finished in a given time, but more finished commodities are delivered in general. Through this combination, the workshop becomes a mechanism of which the individual workers form the various links.”¹⁹ In this respect, there is no concept of the organic in Marx that does not emerge from technical interruptions and caesuras. Every organic constructs its corpus in medial correspondences. It constellates itself from temporal axis manipulations and localization techniques that are technically generated. And this presupposes, as it were within every analogy or correspondence, a combinatorics that has already undermined the economic expression and can also thwart the possibility of its conclusion. An implicit concept of technical communication, a *téchne* of the together has hollowed out the sphere of economic expressions and symbols or has cut into the foundations of categories such as value or surplus value. Marx’s question of technology is therefore not initially ignited by the machine, but rather “earlier still” on dispositions that are just as important to the economy as *téchne*.

18 Marx: Economic Manuscript 1861-1863, p.257.

19 Ibid, p.272.

are immanent as well as non-immanent. Economy and technology are intertwined even “before” a “constant capital” in the machine can become the object of economic analysis in the “proper sense”. Only its parergonal constitution then “also” allows for questions of mechanics, which is reflected as a calculable gain in time and thus becomes an economic variable. All their arrangements, however, are grouped around differential time techniques that begin in the medium of cooperation and simultaneously regroup the orders of time and space in this medium: “The object of work passes through the same space in a shorter time.”²⁰

The question, then, of whether technical configurations are “immanent” to capital or, as it were completely disposable, could also serve “human” purposes, is based from here on a philanthropic misunderstanding. It is wrong because it would come too late. It could only be directed at a technology that, as an instrumentation of mechanical, chemical, electrical or electronic “objects”, is already subject to a technically generated spatiotemporality. Such technical devices, machines, move within horizons of utility or use and thus within those of an economic “value”. Criticism, however, suggests that “earlier” still, to decipher a different text in questions of technology, which has already escaped this economic immanence and deleted every technology in the withdrawal of a *téchne* of common terms. In other words, critique entangles technical categories with common terms, and this will above all also open up a different epoché of the political. Cooperation generates the social corpus or “productive total body” (Marx) that emerges from technical arrangements. It is a technical-medialized body whose organics are produced from discrete cuts. Combinatorics is only the technical name of what is reflected in this corpus as a correspondence of time and space: machine commands that configure and process it are always decisive. Only via this detour, at any rate, is cooperation “a mere effect of the capital that simultaneously applies it. The coherence of their function and their unity as a productive total body lie outside of them, in the capital that brings them together and holds them together.”²¹ This total body is therefore of extraordinary ambiguity and consistency. Its coherence, its functionality and organicity

lie “in capital”, which organizes it as a corpus. But in a certain sense it also lies “outside of capital” – for it is not economic expressions but differences of a *téchne* that form it. This body is configured from techniques of transposition and transubstantiation, in which the framework of economic expressiveness is first established. Parergonally, this opens up a rift that runs through this corpus in each of its divisions and calls up incalculable instabilities in its innermost core.

In this respect, the politics of bodies that Marx has in mind is not a derived function of the economic, not a simple expression of economic determinations. Rather, the transposition of labor is inscribed “from the beginning” in genealogies of disciplinary media powers that assign the use value of labor power. Structured in military terms, they allow production battles to be fought in which techniques of localization and speed gain validity as attributions of the medial. And this sets the cooperation apart from any naïve, pre-critical concept of space. “It is not absolutely necessary for unification to take place in the same space. If 10 astronomers from the observatories of different countries make the same observations, this is not a division of labour, but the performance of the same work in different places, a form of cooperation.”²²

In this respect, space establishes itself as a medial transmission relationship, just like time, which has homogenized itself as spatial. Timeliness and co-spatiality emerge from a medial in-between or intervention. In the productive body as a whole, which is both immanent and non-immanent to capital, the circuitous distance between economy and technology is organized, which leads to a language already withdrawn from the universe of economic expressions. It transposes work into possible and real in order to create its Aristotelianism. Or it shifts the ensemble of disciplinary techniques, like episodes in a war story, into a structure of arrangements in which the parergonal status of the *téchne* in the sense of the “work” is to be decided eco-nomically.

The lines of conflict therefore never run solely in the medium of economic expressions. Even earlier, they are conducted around technical combinatorics, and this will raise the question of techniques of the political itself. At the very least, inscriptions of the technical would remain the blind spot of any analysis that failed to

to record those tacit, parergonal or medial presuppositions that frame economic expressions as much as they interrupt them at their core. However the polyvalence of cooperation may decide techno-politically, its spatio-temporality is characterized by distances that make all “natural” notions of economic cooperation impossible.

“natural” notion of economic cooperation can only arise in a technical-media epoché. “Just as for the division of labor within the manufactory a certain number of simultaneously applied workers forms the material precondition, so for the division of labor within society the size of the population and its density, which here takes the place of agglomeration in the same workshop. However, this density is something relative. A relatively sparsely populated country with developed means of communication has a denser population than a more populated country with undeveloped means of communication, and in this way, for example, the northern states of the American Union are more densely populated than India.”²³

Significance of the machines

Far from locating the ensemble of technology within the horizons of mechanics and thermodynamics, Marx’s critique presupposes concepts of media through which cooperation is introduced and constellated as a marginal precondition of every economy. These media concepts are indispensable in order to be able to think a genealogy of value and surplus value. Media cannot be reduced to given technical means “in which” or “through which” a communication would take place. They are not the form of a content. Nor can they be limited to semiotics of the sign and its machinization – whether the “signifiers” that this machinism processes are phonetic, graphematic or pictorial. All of this would amount to either an economic or a semiological reductionism. Rather, Marx operates from the outset with a “general concept of media”, which is consistently self-crossing and in this respect “is” beyond any possible economy of signs and purposes. It concerns the constellation of bodies as well as conditions of traffic, structures of transportation as well as the circulation of signs. It is concerned with those “general conditions of production, such as ways, channels, etc.”, which indicate how “the real community has constituted itself in the form of capital”; but this is also why these ways and channels do not dissolve into being “a particular condition for any capitalist”²⁴.

For this heralds a certain conflict. Between “general” and “particular conditions” it will open up

the virulent text of an order that is in a certain way an-economic, but at least speaks a different language than the economic one. It is all the more decisive that every concept of critique is affected by medial constellations, and its terminological apparatus speaks of nothing else. It is incessantly about transformations and transmissions. Everywhere “transmissions” are analyzed everywhere, which allow “value” to change its masks. It passes through its forms, mutates and trans- mutates them in order to maintain or multiply itself in them. In the process of labor, new “value” is transferred to the object, and in this process the machine also transfers “value” to the goods that are produced with it. In a dialectical terminology, in concepts of extreme and mediation, in metaphors of transportation, transubstantiation and transposition, an order of transfer – and thus one of the technical – emerges at every turn. Not merely a descendant of “value”, this order is what makes it possible to stage “value” in the first place. Marx writes this in philosophical terms, which he borrows from the arsenals of transcendental philosophy. Of metaphysical origin, however, a logic of parergona- ly rebels in them, intervening with techniques that constantly interrupt and suspend the metaphysical ductus of the concept. These techniques attempt to express, as it were, what can only be expressed to a limited extent in economic and political categories. The technical can only be registered economically in the arrival of a caesura or as an iteration of differences that constantly force the economic concept to take detours. Every technical-medial transmission is the detour that economics must take in order to go through its odyssean circle and make its “sense”. It is dependent on marginal techniques in order to realize itself, and therefore it must constantly expose and abandon itself to them anew. This detour is already foreshadowed when Marx addresses the simple means of labor. In a footnote he explicitly refers to Hegel’s *Encyclopaedia*, in which the simple means of labor is described.

24 Marx: *Grundrisse*, p.437.

ends realize themselves via the means without entering the sphere of the means as ends or “interfering” with it (Hegel). Initially, then, as in Hegel, the means also appears in Marx as a thing or as a complex of things “which the worker interposes between himself and the object of labor and which serve him as a conductor of his activity towards this object”; as Marx adds, this conductor is the organ “which he places between his own bodily organ and the object of labor”,

“which he adds to his own bodily organs, prolonging his natural form, in spite of the Bible”.²⁵ To think of means and machine not only as an extension of the organic, but as “organic” themselves, belongs, however, at the center of every anthropomorphism of technology, and in it a whole metaphysics of the relationship between means and ends continues. Mimetically conceived, it aims to keep technical means conceivable as an image and extension of the human form and controllable as a function of a bodily incarnated intention. Marx explicitly takes up this transcendental illusion of an organic center and its extensions when he speaks of the “extension of the natural form” and concedes that it is a matter of “adding” something to the “own bodily organs”.

But this addition then suddenly turns out to be an incision that interrupts every mimesis of the corporeal and exposes it to another intervention of the technical. Technology reveals what cannot be traced back to a human form and intention. For technology itself produces this form in a certain way, as does the intention that may then emanate from it. “The same

importance that the construction of bone relics has for the recognition of the organization of extinct animal species, relics of work tools have for the assessment of extinct economic social forms. It is not what is done, but how and with which means of labor work is done that distinguishes the economic epochs. The means of work are not only a measure of the development of human labor, but also an indicator of the social conditions in which work is carried out. Among the means of labor themselves, the mechanical means of labor, the totality of which may be called the bone and muscle system of production, offer much more decisive characteristics of a social epoch of production than those means of labor which serve only as receptacles for the object of labor, and the totality of which is quite general.

25 Marx: Capital, Vol. I, p. 194.

can be described as the vessel system of production, such as tubes, barrels, baskets, jars, etc. "26 A rift is unmistakably apparent in this metaphor of the technical. At first it only seems to separate a certain inside from a certain outside. The "vascular system" of production belongs to the

"internal", "content-related" determinations of a society, to the order of use value and exchange value, of utility and purpose. However, it is distinguished from a structure that is not even a "structure". It concerns the "how" and is therefore not included in the "substantive" determinations of an economy. It is no coincidence that Marx sets it apart from the system of vessels "in which" transportation takes place. It does indicate a social relationship "in which" work is carried out. But this does not only mean having distinguished techniques of "how" from this "being in". Above all, social relations are already technically conditioned in themselves and therefore not even completely "in themselves". They are separated from themselves as if by a caesura that allows them to "be" neither simply in themselves nor outside of themselves. The social relations function, as it were, as a framework for themselves. They are distinguished from themselves in a way that allows the technical to become the "indicator" of a difference in which a society or "community" relates to itself, without this being able to be directly presented in economic terms. Technically, this marks what is neither simply in itself nor outside of itself. It indicates, it is a "sign", i.e. not a "sign" that would express a given, self-present quantity. The indicator or sign of technology indicates what remains enigmatic in economic terms.²⁷

And this subverts every instrumental concept of technology. It is not for nothing that before every analysis of the machine, before every critique of a technical device, Marx questions the structure of a cooperation from which a "positive" machinism can first emerge. He wrests machinism from a mechanistic relation of end and means by allowing cooperation to emerge as a mathesis of ratios in the intangible center of every machine. "Machinery – as soon as it is applied capitalistically, is no longer in its beginnings, in which it is usually nothing but a more powerful instrument of craftsmanship – presupposes simple cooperation, and this, as we shall see further on, appears to be a simple cooperation.

26 Ibid, p.194f.

27 Cf. Jacques Derrida: The Voice and the Phenomenon, Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp 1979, pp.79ff.

as a much more important moment in it than in the manufacture based on the division of labor, where it asserts itself only in the principle of multiples, i.e. not only in the fact that the various operations are distributed among different workers, but that ratios take place in which

certain numbers of workers are assigned to the individual operations in groups, subsumed under them. In the mechanical workshop, the most developed form of the capitalist application of machinery, it is essential that many do the same thing. It is even its main principle. “28 Under this condition of a technical incarnation of mathematical “ratios”, however, it can no longer be a matter of writing the history of technology and machinery as that of mechanical “figures” or as that of an “expression” of economic conditions – and even less as a genealogy of organizational implants that would extend a naturalistically conceived body. Technology can neither be “derived” from concepts of value nor from an imago of the human form. Above all, those “ratios” must have become effective in it, in which many have placed themselves in relation to one another or have been placed in relation to one another. Economy and technology are intertwined via a caesura that has already addressed every “in-being” of a society medially and technically. All cooperation manifests itself technically or is written as a mathesis of symbolic machine operations. In this respect, the entanglement that is written in the economic order as a “sign” or “indicator” also offers no prospect of a “dialectical suspension” that would lead it back to the immanence of economic purposes or intentions of a society. Central to the critique are always concepts of postponement and detour, which subvert any idea of a center in a differential logic of ratios. What technology bypasses in a roundabout way is not catchable. It always loses what it makes possible as technology. Only in this structure can not only the “value” but also the industrial machine appear. It describes something other than the solitary relation of worker and object. It does not orchestrate a monologue of labor, but describes “all the objective conditions that are necessary for the process to take place. They do not enter directly into it, but without them it cannot proceed at all or only imperfectly. The general means of labor of this kind is again the earth itself, for it gives the worker the locus standi and his process the field of employment. Through labor

28 Marx: Economic Manuscript 1861-1863, p.316.

already mediated by labor are, for example, work buildings, canals, roads, etc. “29 The “means” itself is therefore already mediated, it “is” a medium, canal or road. And in this respect it does not directly enter into the process of “mediation” that dominates the economy. The “means” steers this process, as it were, by withholding itself in a certain way from its own mediation. An interval emerges that is characterized by a kind of de-mediation of the means. In the technicum of means and machine, Marx deciphers a chiasmus that reads the thing as a sign of a together. For the together is not simply “there”; it is produced technically. It allows technology to step in as a supplement to that non-present “commonality” that allows every origin to be delayed in relation to itself or allows every machine to emerge from techniques of a difference that precedes it. From here, at any rate, it becomes legible what Marx’s text also means when he questions the relationship between the economy and the technical machine. They have always inscribed a different text into the economy. Technically, the together withholds itself from the economy just as much as it enables it, and this affects the mode in which the two “are” together. It is true that all technology emerges from a “work”, and the “common being” also results from a work. But this is not work in the sense that economics seeks to give it. Rather, this work is a response to the fact that no coexistence is simply given. In order to produce it, it requires not only direct labor as it is invented in the economic order. Rather, it requires a different kind of labor that

develops this labor itself in techniques of a common appearance, without therefore becoming labor in the economic sense. This is taken into account by the decisive difference in the concept of labor, which, as so often with Marx, occurs incidentally. “Incidentally, a distinction must be made between general labor and communal labor. Both play their part in the production process, both merge into each other, but both also differ. General labor is all scientific labor, all discovery, all invention. It is conditioned partly by cooperation with the living, partly by the use of the work of others. Communal labor presupposes the immediate cooperation of individuals.”³⁰

This difference keeps the community at a distance from itself.

29 Marx: Capital, Vol. I, p. 195.

30 Marx: Capital, Vol.III, p.113f.

On the one hand, it is produced in that cooperation which is already free in its “simple” form is free of charge. For it does not enter into any economic expression or does not appear in relations of value and price. On the other hand, however, any economic immediacy of the “common” is also thwarted by the difference of this “generality”. It cannot be reduced to concepts of presence in economics, but speaks above all of an irreducible absence. For example, it does not only include the living. It “uses” the works of the past. It traverses the economic conditions from a difference that cannot be economically appropriated without further ado and yet is to be unceasingly appropriated into economic immanence in order to let it be what it is. Techniques of cooperation and science describe something like a reserve or a withdrawal of medial techniques in which concepts of common work stand out from those of general work. They allow the concept of labor to be broken in itself several times over, and this inspires the economic process incessantly by approaching it as a difference to itself. It makes use of the withdrawn “generality” as if it were free of charge, without becoming aware of it. This is what feeds the order of “value”, as Marx emphasizes: “Apart from the natural material, natural forces that cost nothing can be incorporated into the production process as agents with greater or lesser effectiveness. The degree of their effectiveness depends on methods and scientific progress which cost the capitalist nothing. The same is true of the social combination of labor power in the production process and of the accumulated skill of individual workers.”³¹ Every economic expression feeds itself from that which must remain unexpressed. Like a reserve from which economic benefits can be drawn, cooperation and science also withhold the techniques of their economic appropriation.

In a certain way, technology thus marks a text that escapes the ordo of economic determinations just as much as it makes it possible. It is true that technology functions as a “means” in every place that critique passes through, which is offered up in order to stage economic expression and allow it to be mirrored. But this future, in which the expressions refer to each other or are referred to each other as identical, is thwarted by a mathesis of ratios. They speak as *téchne* of the withdrawal of a “community” whose parer-

31 Marx: Capital, vol.I, p.356.

gonality is economically uncontrollable. And this determines not only the validity of economic categories, but above all the genealogy of modes of production. For initially, the technical production of uniformity and simultaneity manifests itself in the manufactory. A kind of poenless body is already produced in it, in whose supple closedness the specific dictate of a

technical temporality is incarnated. “The transition from one operation to another interrupts the flow of his work and, as it were, forms pores in his working day. These pores condense as soon as he performs one and the same operation continuously throughout the day, or they disappear to the extent that the change of his operation decreases.”³² The machine-based cooperation of the manufactory thus constitutes a productive corpus that is, as it were, deprived of its breath. Its pores condense or close. But the homogeneity, the unity and density that this body thus gains are in turn the expression of a technical symbolism that inscribes itself into it as a differential structure. Its organics emerge from incisions in which a certain machinery has settled on it and assembled it differently. It allows each organon to emerge from combinatorics in which temporal-spatial differences are combined and condensed in the discrete beats of a machine body. Only this allows the capitalist division of labor to emerge, in which the individual bodies are split into partial objects. Thus manufacture was initially organized as an economy of manual labour based on the division of labour, and its metaphysics is logically one of the hand that must be applied. Hardly anything Marx elaborates more sharply, hardly anything he accentuates more persistently, in order to distinguish the dispositions of industrial cooperation and division of labor from those of manufacture. The differentiation of the instruments of labour, in which “each special instrument only works in its entirety in the hands of specific sub-workers, characterizes the manufactory”.³³ This will then reveal the differences to large-scale industry. For the great machine of industrialism breaks with this “special instrument” and thus also with the metaphysics of the hand. The mathematization of production cuts into this metaphysics and, together with the industrial machine, constitutes dispositives of a multiple organic of productive bodies for which manual labour no longer offers a “reference”. “reference” anymore. This incision will be decisive.

32 Ibid, p.360f.

It introduces the functions of a machine technology in which what Marx would call the scientification of production becomes apparent. With it, another *téchne* of temporality encroaches on the structure of labor. With the disciplining of bodies, it also shifts the constellations of their organics. For it is not, as one might assume, the mechanical drive in which the concept of the industrial machine is founded; it is not the use of water, wind or steam that constitutes the technical revolution of capital. All of these are mere consequences that emanate from a completely different incision. Rather, the upheaval began at the very center of manufacture. Scientification first and foremost deprives the hand of its privilege. “It is precisely this last part of the instrument of craftsmanship that the industrial revolution seizes first and leaves to man, in addition to the new work of monitoring the machine with his eye and improving its errors with his hand, initially still the purely mechanical role of the driving force.”³⁴ Significantly, therefore, it is not energetic principles of drive that characterize the concept of the machine, nor aspects of a “natural” organics in which the machine is not a “natural” organics.

“natural” organics in which the technical revolution begins. With the industrial machine, the hand ceases to be a privileged organ of the productive body. This constitutes the revolution of the technical, and its significance can hardly be overestimated.

Monitoring functions now take the place of the hand and release logics in which it will play a subordinate role. As the science of ratios becomes technologically incarnated, “spirit” and

“thing”, which are dependent on the mediation of the hand, no longer face each other in production. The mechanical divisions of the productive body can no longer or less and less be traced in a Cartesian duality of *res extensa* and *res cogitans*. By taking over functions that were assigned to the hand under the conditions of manufacture, industrial machinery completely rewrites the logic of partial objects. It no longer addresses itself in terms of differences between “manual and mental labor”, but allows concepts of “mind” and “body” themselves to disintegrate. The technological revolution introduces a difference that traverses all partial objects equally and reconstellates them under the conditions of a discrete time. It dictates an analytics of the productive process, the precondition or possibility of which lies in that of temporally structured or clocked continuum. “The clock is the first automaton used for practical purposes and the whole theory of the production of uniform motion is developed on it. [...] There is also no doubt that in the 18th century the clock gave the first idea of applying automata (namely those moved by springs) to production. “³⁵ Only the automaton of the clock creates the possibility of coordinating or producing a uniform movement from correspondences of points in time in such a way that body multiplicities can be condensed into pore-less suppleness. Only with the symbolic order of clock time do analogies or correspondences become conceivable, which “then”, in a certain sense belatedly, also demand a different energetics of drive or a different economy of force. The decisive factor here, however, is not mechanical or, in the broadest sense, analogous techniques. What is decisive is the mathesis that drives these techniques. It is true that Marx analyzes this constellation in terms of those factory techniques or technologies of an *automaton* that he has in mind – mechanics, force and transmission, the universe of thermodynamics, energy constancy and entropy. But the decisive factor is that this machinic energetics must be preceded by time technologies that will have controlled everything that could be addressed as an analog process from a discrete beat of empty places or a mathesis that has settled in the real as time and is processed here. Only time techniques enable something like analog techniques of energy, power and transmission. It is true that the *imago* of production flows is realized in them, which are then a first for the metaphysics of capital. But these flows, and this is decisive, presuppose non-analog techniques. Their temporalities are reflected – with an unavoidable delay, which nevertheless always occurs too early – in the technical present as the interruption from which the frictions of energy and force first emerge: “The doctrine of friction and thus the investigations into the mathematical forms of gears, teeth, etc. were all made at the mill; ditto here first the doctrine of measuring the degree of moving force, of the best way to apply it, etc. [...] Indeed, the doctrine of friction and thus the investigations into the mathematical forms of gears, teeth, etc. were all made at the mill. [...] Hence, in fact, the name mill and mill, which came into being during the manufacturing period, for all mechanical motive power geared to practical purposes. “³⁶

³⁵ Marx: Letter to Engels of 28.2.1863, in: Marx: Excerpts on the Division of Labor, Machinery and Industry, Frankfurt/M.; Berlin; Vienna: Ullstein 1982, Appendix 2, p.212f.

³⁶ Ibid.

In this respect, however, Marx can project the analysis of the manufactory as that of a clockwork and decipher in it what will define the industrial machine. It is true that a watch train also consists of countless individual parts that have to be assembled. But because its production already presupposes the great machinery, it cannot function as the organon of

manufacture, from which the structural principles of the great industry in turn emerge. “But the watch, on which William Petty also illustrates the manufactory division of labor. From the individual work of a Nuremberg craftsman, the clock was transformed into the social product of a myriad of sub-workers [...]”.³⁷ With the clock, the temporal-spatial orders dispose themselves into a continuum or a simultaneity of time “in” space. And this revolutionizes all concepts of economically productive instances. The discrete beat, in which the automaton entering the real already announces itself as an order of number, divides above all the productive bodies as machines. They are subject to a logic of discreteness that divides them and constellates them into another body. “The particular partial labor is not only distributed among different individuals, but the individual itself is divided.”³⁸ In this respect, the machine incisions do not only de-privilege the hand. They pass through the productive bodies by producing them from analytical fragmentations and constantly reassembling them. They divide these bodies and thus practically refute what the idea of the individual as an “indivisible” had wanted to suggest. If there is a Marxian “anthropology”, then it is in this sense of machine-medial incisions. They make distinctions between between “mental” and “physical” labor. They make traditional concepts of “mind” and “body” themselves questionable, in which the individualized had wanted to assure itself of itself. In this respect, Marx’s effort to reconstruct constellations of economy and technology under the conditions of the machine speaks of profound shifts that will also affect the body’s counterpart, namely the phantasm of the “mind”. These divisions not only create the productive body out of individuals. For their part, they allow the individuals to emerge from divisions that produce their body as a productive instance. This is the “intelligence” that is released in a mechanical ma- thesis of ratios. Inversions of the

37 Marx: Capital, Vol. I, p. 362.

38 Ibid, p.381.

machine do not make the military disciplinary powers of “regimen- tation” superfluous, which Marx had described as indispensable even for simple cooperation. But they allow these powers to be incorporated into the mediality of the clocked machine itself in order to write the war history of capital as one of technologies – and the war suitability of bodies as that of their technical armoring. In it, labor itself becomes the marginal function of a temporally clocked mediality that has become machine-like and that overarches the production process just as much as the labor that functions within it. “The production process has ceased to be a labor process in the sense that labor, as the unit dominating it, encroaches upon it. Rather, it appears only as a conscious organ, at many points of the mechanical system in individual living workers; dispersed, subsumed under the overall process of the machinery itself, itself only a member of the system, whose unity exists not in the living workers, but in the living (active) machinery, which appears to its individual, insignificant activity as an enormous organism.”³⁹

All the terms and metaphors that Marx introduces in order to grasp the mechanical character of this synthesis speak in this respect of certain relationships between organism and the uncanny. Life” emerges from a machinism of discrete temporalities. It is dependent on them and is controlled or moves

“in” a time that is predetermined by these time cycles. At the same time, however, these time cycles are written down in the forms of mechanical organisms in order to articulate

themselves in the “life” of this machine. In this respect, a logic of the discrete, which allows its machines to “come to life”, as it were, in the processing of ratios, eludes or disguises itself in the forms of technology. Only for this reason can those phantasms return in concepts of the organic that allow the apparatus to be animated because it moves synchronously. “A system of machinery, whether it is based on the mere cooperation of similar working machines, as in weaving, or on a combination of different ones, as in spinning, forms in and of itself a great automaton as soon as it is driven by a self-moving first motor.”⁴⁰ From here, all criticism of an “alienation” of “life” could initially open up and justify itself. It could, for example, support the accusation that machinism has disputed life’s own terrain.

39 Marx: Grundrisse, p.593.

40 Marx: Capital, Vol.I, p.401f.

the form no less than the time, the sovereignty no less than the intention. And indeed, the synchronicity that is produced via the drive intertwines machinism into a “monster” that is animated by a “demonic force”, as Marx says. However, such a critique of alienation would still remain entangled in the imaginary. In phenomenologies of analogous formations, it fails to recognize what has already eluded them as the symbolism of discrete temporal acts. For this reason, Marx repeats again and again that the logic of machinery is not to be conceived from principles of form, but from a science of ratios. In any case, the insistence with which he conceives of inductive machinism not from the drive, but from a combinatorics of the earlier “craft machines”, denies that the first determination of the machine would be its non-human “drive”. On the contrary, the Roman water mill, according to Marx the elementary form of all machinery like the compass, gunpowder, printing press and automatic clock, already presupposes a discrete technique of timeliness as mathematics. It allows what takes place mechanically to interlock, but therefore cannot be conceived from the principles of mechanics alone. Rather, the history of machinism offers above all the occasion to decipher it as a genealogy of a projection of mathematical symbolizations, which in this respect already elude an imago of the uncanny. For in certain respects, this machinism always already moves within orders of this mathesis. “The sporadic application of machinery became very important in the 17th century because it offered the great mathematicians of that time practical clues and stimuli for the creation of modern mechanics.”⁴¹ Modern mechanics itself emerges from this mathesis, which is based on an economy of force and produces it. Every machine is in itself an application of the clock or its discrete beat, which extends into areas of force and energetics as well as into its peripheries.

But this makes all questions of the parergo-

nal recur all the more significantly. Machinism is opened up and traversed by a machinelic symbolism that comes to the fore in all its forms, as it were from behind. The mathesis addresses what appears as a commonality in technical spaces and times, without itself appearing as a condition of this appearance. In it, an elusive text is written, from which form and presence, power and transmission only emerge.

41 Ibid. p.368f.

can be released. And only in this respect can work – the “soul of economy”, metaphor of life and vitality – can emerge from these transubstantiations of a technique. All possibilities of force and measure have already occurred technically in this

work in an order of processing numbers. Mechanical techniques only reproduce what can be automated in them as a recurrence of a mathesis on itself and in itself. And that is why this automatism of the machinery will ultimately be completed in the medium of a self-control in which the numerical relations return to themselves mechanically. In this, the unsecret phantasm of their presence, their form and organics, approaches its immanent destiny, at which it also disintegrates.

“Thus, for example, the apparatus that automatically stops the spinning machine as soon as a single thread breaks, and the self-acting stop, which stops the improved steam loom as soon as the bobbin of the weaver’s shuttle runs out of beating thread, are entirely modern inventions. ⁴² Where data not only indicate the state of a machine, but also determine the further behavior of this machine itself as machine commands, there is no boundary that industrial machinism encounters. In a precise way, it always approaches itself from these limits of its own programmability or is configured around them. In all mechanics, the logic of data-technical recursion has already been expressed, which in the interior of the spinning machine or automatic loom heralds the calculating machine that will become the “machine of all machines”. Even the mechanical machine, which stores information about its respective state, requires a memory, and no less requires a technology that reads this information and transfers it back to the machine as an instruction. This is what constitutes the great machine as an “industrial perpetuum mobile” (Marx). And that is why there is no “fundamental” caesura between the mechanical machine and the calculating machine that controls itself. Or there is only to the extent that the calculating machine will have “universalized” what, as a mechanical machine, had already obeyed a set of commands aimed at specific purposes. The history of technology that emerges from Marx is always history at the limits of its technical programmability.

It is therefore no coincidence that Charles Babbage, whose works along with those of André Ure represent the central references for Marx in the history of technology, exemplifies the principle of this

⁴² Ibid, p.402.

calculating machine to the functions of the mechanical loom.

“There is an almost perfect analogy between the analytical machine and this well-known process: 1. the memory, into which all arithmetical variables as well as the results of other operations are entered, and 2. the ‘mill’, i.e. the drive into which they are read. ⁴³ In a movement that seems like the irony of a war economy of technical thought, the mathesis thus returns in that loom in whose case the Platonic order of work and visibility, writing and voice had already been exemplified.⁴⁴ In Plato’s weaving technique, the work of the weaver’s shuttle was reserved for the task of weaving the threads of text and thus turning them towards a fulfilled presence of the spoken word, which alone could circulate as *lógos*. Now, under the conditions of the machine, this segregating, differentiating, pre-expressive work of the text enters into the production of the real as an automaton. It gives the processing grapheme the status of understanding the work as a machine language among itself. The automaton iterates around a differential symbol that is written as well as read in it in order to control what results for it as work. In this way, what animates the machine as “spirit” is fulfilled in the program’s concealed trace of writing – and will thus suspend any philosophical concept of this “spirit”. As Marx not in vain points out, the automatism of the machine medium displaces all “work” by

constantly shifting, displacing or removing the productive corpus. The machine thus becomes a demon not because it addresses the commonality in technically iterating ratios, but because it sets out to appropriate the symbolic in the form of an economic simultaneity that rejects it above all. This, however, is uncanny in several senses. In this monstrosity, work is transubstantiated, it falls prey to those theologies of supernatural creative powers in which citizens celebrate it. It is no coincidence that all the phantasms of its supernaturalness return in a metaphysics that sets out to appropriate a boundless time. As Babbage noted, “it is impossible to build a machine that takes up an infinite amount of space; but it is possible to build a finite machine and make it work indefinitely. I have been able to make use of this substitution of the infinity of space for the

43 Charles Babbage: Passages from a Philosopher's Life, Berlin: Kadmos 1997, p.82.

44 Cf. Plato: Cratylus, 388a and b.

unlimitedness of time in order to limit the size of the machine while at the same time maintaining its unlimited capabilities. “45

To speak of a declaration of war of a certain temporality on space is therefore not a metaphor; or it is a metaphor only in the sense in which every transfer has already become a declaration of war on the irrecoverability of the difference between space and time. In the machinism of industry, which extends to unlimited times, the time-war of capital becomes the economic principle itself. The transubstantiation of labor, the translation of difference into an unlimited capacity to work, which seems to come from eternity and is therefore endowed with all supernatural potencies, results from seams of form and differential address that can only be staged as the discord of war. “One could write a whole history of the inventions since 1830 that came into being merely as a means of war for capital against workers' men. We remember above all the selfacting mule because it opens up a new epoch of the automatic system. “46 But criticism will be all the less able to stop at the shape of the machine. Rather, it will have to decipher and expose what, as a written difference in every machine, is not form, but – different.

translated by deepL.

taken from the book: Hans-Joachim Lenger “Marx Zu Folge”

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